

# FLORIDAS ON MIAMI, FLORIDA

DURING YOUR CARIBBEAN CRUISE, YOU MAY DREAM OF LIVING IN PARADISE, OF PACKING IT ALL UP AND ESCAPING TO THE ISLANDS. WHILE THAT'S A GREAT FANTASY, THE REALITY OF TRYING TO MAKE A LIVING MAKES IT LESS ATTRACTIVE. BUT THERE'S ALWAYS MIAMI. NO, REALLY, MIAMI. IT'S A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE. JUST ASK RICHARD AND RANA FLORIDA, THE POWER COUPLE BEHIND THE CREATIVE CLASS GROUP.

## HIS TAKE

BY RICHARD FLORIDA

I grew up in working class New Jersey, but because of the accident of my last name, I've always felt an affinity to Miami. My brother and I had a rock band in high school and my father used to joke that we should call it Richard Florida and the Sunshines. If he'd had a daughter, he liked to quip, he would have named her Sunny.

After I went to college at Rutgers, I attended graduate school at Columbia in New York City. I lived in a number of U.S. cities while I was starting my academic career, but back then it would have never occurred to me to live in Miami. Florida, I thought, was where you went to retire, to unplug, to disconnect. It was a destination for people who wanted to stop thinking and give their brains a rest.

Boy, was I wrong.

The first hint I had of how wrong I was came when my wife and I were living and working in Washington, DC, and we found that we could almost never make weekend plans with friends because they had all skipped town by Friday afternoon. Just where had these Type A, über-successful friends all gone? To Miami. On the direct flight—DCA to MIA in four hours, door to door.

After we moved to Toronto, we rented a place in Miami to escape the bitter northern winters. Then we bought a condo. By then, the focus of my academic work had shifted from manufacturing technology and economic development to cities and city regions, and in particular, how the quality of life they offer impacts their economies. When I looked at Miami from that perspective, I saw that it ranked right up there on all sorts of critical metrics—arts and culture, climate, transportation access, walkability, and cost of living. Quality of place has always mattered, but in the post-industrial, creative age, it has begun to matter decisively. Miami, I realized, is well-poised for the creative age, and it could even take the lead in showing other cities how they can make the transition—though it will take a bit of doing.

What do I mean by the “creative age”? The global economy is undergoing a tectonic shift from a manufacturing model to a knowledge-based model. Back in the Agricultural and Industrial Ages, access to natural resources or locations at the crossroads of trade routes drove the rise of cities.

Today, a city or city region's economic success hinges upon four factors: talent, technology, tolerance, and territorial assets.

One-third of the U.S. workforce belongs to what I've dubbed the Creative Class, which includes classic knowledge-based workers in healthcare, business and finance, law and education, as well as scientists, engineers, techies, researchers, artists, designers, writers, academics, media professionals, and musicians. The higher the share of these kinds of workers a city has, the more it will prosper. To attract them and keep them stimulated and productive, it needs superb quality of place.

High tech industry—computers and software, biotechnology, robotics, and the like—is a great driver of economic growth, both in its own right and

because of the spillovers it creates. One high-tech job can create as many as five service jobs, indirectly.

And then there is tolerance, a city's openness to racial, sexual, and cultural diversity. It has been demonstrated again and again that places that are high in tolerance towards out-of-the-mainstream groups (immigrants, homosexuals, minorities, and so on) experience higher-quality economic growth. In his 2007 book, *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools and Societies*, economist Scott Page shows how new ideas and innovations are generated most efficiently in places that are open to a wide variety of cognitive styles. It should come as no surprise that talented people would want to congregate in places that are more conducive to outside-the-box thinking.

A place's territorial assets consist of three things: 1) What's there, its built and natural environment; 2) Who's there, or the varieties of people who live there; and 3) What's going on, or the vibrancy of its cultural life.

All these factors work together. It's hard to attract talent unless you're open to all kinds of people, offer the work they seek, and provide them with a good quality of life. By the same token, it's hard to provide a good quality of life without the talent that can drive an innovative economy and

ignite a cultural life. A place that boasts world-class universities and research institutions but is culturally hostile towards foreigners, gays, or other “unconventional” groups will have trouble drawing the talent that will keep those universities and institutions humming, while a place known as an alternative-lifestyle enclave but that lacks a prominent university will also fall short of the mark.

So how does Miami stack up? Twenty-six percent of its work force belongs to the creative class. That's not great, whether compared to a city like Washington, DC,

or San Francisco, where the creative class share is as high as 40 percent, or to the national average. But Miami is well known as a melting pot of nationalities and religions, with large numbers of gays, artists and entertainers, and of course, immigrants. It is not just one of America's great metros; it serves double duty as a Latin American and South American center of finance, business, and media.

On the technology front, Miami is hardly a threat to Silicon Valley, but it boasts high levels of medical and healthcare prowess and technology and the Wynwood area has emerged as something of a startup scene. The Miami metro raked in more than \$300 million in venture capital investment in 2013, the sixteenth highest take among the three-hundred-and-eighty-plus U.S. metro regions. The broader Southern Florida mega-region, which includes Tampa and Orlando, took in a total of nearly \$600 million in venture capital (\$150 million of it in Tampa, \$75 million in Orlando), placing it among the top dozen venture capital regions in the United States. Between 2000 and 2011, the region saw greater growth in the numbers of its high-tech immigrant entrepreneurs than either San Jose or San Francisco.

PEOPLE WHO CAN CHOOSE WHERE THEY LIVE ARE INCREASINGLY OPTING FOR MIAMI'S DIVERSITY AND BUZZ, ITS SPECTACULAR BEACHES, AND ITS VIBRANT ARTS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS.

People who can choose where they live are increasingly opting for Miami's diversity and buzz, its spectacular beaches, and its vibrant arts and cultural institutions. For some or all of the year, it is a destination of choice for growing numbers of affluent and creative-class types from the U.S. and around the world. Miami's world-class airport makes it a global hub, with a substantial circulation of people in as well as out. All of this constitutes a base on which Miami can build its future as a leading city in the creative economy.

Before the 2008 economic crisis, Miami's economic growth was oriented predominantly toward real estate: large-scale suburban developments, high-rise condos, stadiums, and the like. Post-crash, Miami is turning to the fundamental building blocks of long-term economic growth: human capital and innovation. For all the worries that the city's newly built condos would stand forever empty, the cranes have come back, and they're building a downtown where the average resident's age is thirty-six.

Forty years ago, Miami didn't have a public research university. Today, the metro ranks seventh in the U.S. for college students per capita. From the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts to the New World Center, from the Pérez Art Museum Miami to The Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science—all of which have sprouted up in just the past eight years—the city's culture is flowering. It's happening at the grassroots level as well—in Wynwood and Little Haiti, and even in Opa-Locka and Hialeah.

But all that said, there's lots more work that needs to be done before Miami can realize its full potential. For one thing, both the city's long history and its infrastructure define it as a tourist and resort-home destination. For all of the green shoots of tech, Miami's economy remains largely service-driven. That needs to change.

The percentage of Miami residents over the age of twenty-five who have attained a bachelor's degree or higher (29 percent) is on a par with Houston (28.9 percent) and Orlando (27.6 percent), but it is still significantly below the average (31.3 percent) for metros with populations above one million. Miami's research and science capabilities are well below the national average as well. Occupations in life, physical, and social sciences are 50 percent below the national average. The lesson is clear: Research and science must be a high-priority investment.

Miami's bohemian index (its concentration of working artists, musicians, writers, and designers) is middling as well, on a par with places like Atlanta and Baltimore.

We often think of diversity as a moral imperative, but it is also a business imperative. Miami ranks very high indeed on tolerance and diversity, just behind San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York.

Added to this key strength is Miami's expertise in a range of industries—specifically, hospitality, retail, real estate, management, manufacturing, information, and arts and recreation. Miami Beach is best suited for lifestyle entrepreneurship while Miami is better suited for tech and related kinds of entrepreneurship.

The city needs to leverage all of its strengths, and as spectacular as it may already be, keep investing in its quality of place, whether transit, schools, parks, or broadband. But as important as it is to attract creatives, Miami mustn't neglect its service workers either, who are falling further and further behind economically. Given the world-class service infrastructure Miami has, it is potentially a powerful laboratory for upgrading the productivity and hence the pay of service-class work.

And the level of car dependence in southern Florida is outrageous. My own research suggests that you can get away with it at 2.5 million people. You can even get away with it at three million people. But once a region passes the 2.5 million mark (and the Miami metro is at five million) you need to have robust transit infrastructure. That means substantial investments in light rail and bullet trains, but also such relatively

inexpensive ones as bike trails and better sidewalks.

If Miami is more than the sum of its beaches and bars, let's not knock them either. One of the city's premier strengths—and one of its most formidable building blocks for the creative economy—is that people want to be here. Miami's incredible climate, oceanfront, and nightlife draw people from all over the world. The result is a city that's more well-rounded, sophisticated, culturally intriguing, and economically exciting than I ever dreamed when I was growing up in New Jersey. It's a city that has its finger on the pulse of the future and its eye on the emerging creative economy.

Richard Florida is the author of the best-seller *The Rise of the Creative Class*. He is cofounder of *City Lab* and Editor-at-Large of *The Atlantic*. He divides his time between Toronto, where he directs the Martin Prosperity Institute at the University of Toronto, New York, where he is Global Research Professor at NYU, and Miami.  
@Richard\_florida www.richardflorida.com



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## HER TAKE

BY RANA FLORIDA

I always pictured myself as a California girl and never thought I'd be living in Florida—much less that “Florida” would be my last name. But Florida is where I am and who I am, and I couldn't be happier.

I grew up in Michigan, and although I loved the green and beautiful summers that the Great Lakes provided, I dreaded the dark, cold winters. So, early on I began dreaming of a life in sunny Los Angeles. But career and marriage led me down a different path—to more frigid temperatures in New York and Toronto. As my husband and I shivered through the winter months, it became imperative for us to find a warm-weather escape in the same time zone as the snowy cities we called home. That's when I put my California fantasies on hold for a new Florida dream. I had fallen in love with the guy and now I was ready to fall for the place.

Alec Baldwin summed it up perfectly in an episode of *30 Rock*. Liz Lemon asks Jack why he is going to Miami. His reply: “Why does anyone go to Miami? It's an adult playground.”

Miami is a warm-weather beach town with a sophisticated clientele that loves to play. Being raised in the Midwest, I grew up with the mentality that you should study hard and work hard—playing hard was not part of the equation. But in Miami's vibrant community, it wasn't all that difficult to adjust. The mix of paradisiacal weather, local heritage, and international culture, from the South Americans, Italians, and French, each contributing their own brand of chic, created a magical microcosm of a city.

Of course, it wasn't always that way. Miami Beach was once a drug-infested criminal enclave, and South Beach—now the epitome of über vogue—was referred to as “God's waiting room,” the place where frail, elderly people waited out the inevitable.

The city's transformation has been remarkable. One of the hinge moments came in the late 1970s and early 1980s when fashion photographers from New York and around the world were looking for a fresh destination for their beach-based fashion shoots. They found it in Miami, bringing the models, stylists, and graphic designers of the fashion world with them. Soon enough, Miami Beach became *the* hot spot for the fashion crowd of the nineties, while the night clubs and DJ parties fueled an entertainment scene like no other.

I was a part of it. On weekends, my friends and I would fly down for a couple of days of roller blading, mojitos on the beach, and dancing. We loved it—no other place compared for fun and sun in a quick direct flight.

In time, I grew up, and so did Miami and its beaches. It now has so much more to offer than just youthful hijinks, and I am at a point in my life where I can appreciate it all.

Perhaps the most startling of the grown-up pursuits taking over Miami



and Miami Beach in recent years—available to all ages, of course—is the art and culture scene. Much of it was kick-started by investments from such community institutions as the James L. Knight Foundation, which seeded many local arts programs. Art Basel, the international annual event that commandeers the city and beaches during the first week of December, has also helped Miami explode as a cultural mecca. The contemporary fair culls works from more than 260 of the world's top galleries, luring in artists, gallerists, world-renowned collectors, museum

directors, curators, celebrities, and some seven thousand art-loving visitors to take part in Miami's artistic spirit.

Those visitors celebrate all over town. No longer contained to the Miami Beach Convention Center, Art Basel-related events and popup exhibitions feature emerging artists and performers, and take place on both sides of the causeways: on the beach, downtown, in Wynwood, the Design District, MIMO, and many other surrounding neighborhoods. Special gallery and museum exhibitions, cultural events, satellite fairs, and installations ooze over to the parking lots and sandy beaches, transforming the entire area into a cultural mecca—with a strong supply of parties and celebrations to boot.

Of course, Miami's art scene isn't limited to one week a year. The newly opened Pérez Art Museum Miami is a modern and contemporary art space designed by Herzog & de Meuron. Located on the waterfront, it is notable not just for its spectacular exhibitions but also for its incredible outdoor hanging gardens as well as the views of the gorgeous Biscayne Bay that greet you on arrival.

Miami's mainland is also home to some of the art world's most renowned public and private collections. The Design District is home to the De La Cruz Collection Contemporary Art Space, while in the neighboring Wynwood Arts District there's a whole host of galleries and world-class collections—including Debra and Dennis Scholl's contemporary art collection at the World Class Boxing exhibition space, the celebrated Margulies Collection at the Warehouse, and the Craig Robins Collection, which is displayed in Dacra properties throughout Miami. The Rubell Family Collection, one of the world's largest privately owned contemporary art collections, is housed in a former DEA building; the amazing 29,000-square-foot public gallery space houses works by the likes of Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons, Cindy Sherman, and Andy Warhol.

The Wynwood Arts District is also home to Wynwood Walls. Conceived by late urban community builder Tony Goldman, the public art project converted a formerly dreary warehouse district into a spectacular outdoor

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canvas for graffiti art. Now co-curated by Jeffrey Deitch, former director of LA's Museum of Contemporary Art, the Wynwood Walls are decorated with works by renowned artists from all over the globe, including Os Gemeos, Kenny Scharf, Shepard Fairey, Aiko, and FUTURA 2000. Set in the midst of the open-air street art statement, Wynwood Kitchen and Bar turns dining and drinking into a memorable artistic experience, immersing diners in the atmosphere of the street museum. Visually stimulating, Wynwood also a bustling environment during the monthly Second Saturday art walks, which attract thousands of art lovers to the neighborhood, wandering the streets until late in the evening.

Wynwood's neighbor, Miami's Design District, offers an urban shopping experience. The outdoor retail and restaurant neighborhood has undergone major renovations and now presents luxury brands in fashion, design, art, and architecture, with lots of great dining options. The eighteen-square-block neighborhood has been transformed from a warehouse district into the vibrant destination it is today, replete with 130 art galleries, showrooms, architecture firms, antiques dealers, lively restaurants, and bars. Savvy shoppers flock to the stores of the finest names in design, fashion, and luxury such as Marni, Ligne Roset, Kartell, and Christian Louboutin.

Miami's cultural offerings aren't limited to art and design, however. The city has so many performing and cultural arts centers, including the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts—the go-to theater for ballets, operas, Broadway, orchestras, and more. On Miami Beach, famed architect Frank Gehry created the New World Center, home to the New World Symphony, which is dedicated to the artistic, personal, and professional development of outstanding graduates of music programs. The New World Symphony, under the leadership of my friend Howard Herring and the artistic directorship of Michael Tilson Thomas, performs traditional and modern works and features renowned soloists and guest conductors. Bring a blanket and a picnic basket and enjoy a free concert under the palms on the seven-thousand-square-foot projection wall.

Another architectural gem on Miami Beach is actually something you don't often read about in travel articles: a parking garage. Located at 1111 Lincoln Road, the concrete-and-glass structure boasts one of the city's most visually appealing designs. Built by world-renowned architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron—the same architect group behind the Pérez Art Museum Miami—1111 not only houses the world's most stunning parking garage, it's a mixed-use development with residences, restaurants, and retail stores on the ground level. But the best part may be the 25,000-square-foot rooftop, which has been turned into an event space that offers some of

the Beach's best panoramic views of the ocean, bay, and city.

At the southern tip of South Beach, the beautifully designed seventeen-acre South Pointe Park is where Biscayne Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean by Government Cut—the entrance to Port Miami. It is the preferred playground to relax, picnic, jog, or ride on a weekend morning. Miami is, of course, the birthplace of the South Beach Diet, so it seems quite fitting that the body-conscious city is filled with fitness classes, from CrossFit to Flywheel, Pilates to yoga. And for tennis and golf buffs, there are beautiful public courses on Alton Road and in Flamingo Park. But for the perfectly enjoyable workout, try paddle-boarding in the bay against a backdrop of the gorgeous views of Fisher Island, downtown Miami, and the Atlantic—accompanied by the music of waves licking the rocks. Great people-watching too.

After such a long list of fun, you'd think the Miami area was all about playing hard, but it is now a mecca for entrepreneurs, too, who care about quality of life. What better paradise to launch a startup company? The LAB Miami agreed and created a ten-thousand-square-foot campus in Wynwood for social and tech innovators, a coworking space where entrepreneurs flock.

My husband and I witnessed the enthusiasm of Miami growing as a tech, entrepreneurial, and creative hub firsthand when we launched Start-Up City Miami just two years ago, in partnership with *The Atlantic* and the James L. Knight Foundation. Doves of entrepreneurs showed up eager to participate. With our friend Mayor Philip Levine now at the helm of the City of Miami Beach, it is easier than ever to start a business on the beach, given his culture of yes. And his efforts

to transform South Beach's Washington Avenue into a startup corridor will surely foster a climate of entrepreneurship. In 2014, my husband, colleagues, and I, as part of the Creative Class Group, joined Florida International University and their Urban Lab to launch the Miami Creativity Initiative to discuss the importance of creativity to the economy.

All this coupled with miles of sandy beaches and warm blue water, with classic Art Deco architecture, great art and culture, diversity, and a glittering nightlife, Miami Beach and the City of Miami are not only the favorite year-round hotspots for travelers, but increasingly for the Creative Class. After all, cities are living, breathing canvases on which you can create your own experience, and Miami awaits. **H**

Rana Florida is CEO of the Creative Class Group and author of best-selling book *Upgrade, Taking Your Work and Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary*. She writes on business and leadership for the *Huffington Post*, *Fast Company*, and *Inc.com*. Follow her on Twitter @ranaflorida. [www.ranaflorida.com](http://www.ranaflorida.com)



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